

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN
GRAY 109

"Her name is Sibyl Vane."

"Never heard of her."

"No one has. People will some day, however.
She is a
genius."

"My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are
a decorative
sex. They never have anything to say, but
they say it
charmingly. Women represent the triumph of
matter over
mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind
over morals."

"Harry, how can you?"

"My dear Dorian, it is quite true. I am
analysing women at
the present, so I ought to know. The subject is not
so abstruse
as I thought it was. I find that, ultimately,
there are only
two kinds of women, the plain and the coloured.
The plain
women are very useful. If you want to gain a
reputation for
respectability, you have merely to take them down
to supper.
The other women are very charming. They
commit one mis-
take, however. They paint in order to try and
look young.
Our grandmothers painted in order to try and talk
brilliantly.
Rouge and *esprit* used to go together. That is
all over now.
As long as a woman can look ten years younger
than her own
daughter, she is perfectly satisfied. As for
conversation, there
are only five women in London worth talking to,
and two of
these can't be admitted into decent society.
However, tell me
about your genius. How long have you known
her?"

"Ah! Harry, your views terrify me."

"Never mind that. How long have you known
her?"

"About three weeks."

"And where did you come across her?*"

"I will tell you, Harry; but you mustn't be
unsympathetic
about it. After all, it never would have happened
if I had not
met you. You filled me with a wild desire to know
everything
about life. For days after I met you, something
seemed to
throb in my veins. As I lounged in the Park, or
strolled down
Piccadilly, I used to look at every one who passed
me, and
wonder, with a mad curiosity, what sort of lives
they led.
Some of them fascinated me. Others filled me
with terror.
There was an exquisite poison in the air, I had a
passion for
sensations. „ . . Well, one evening about seven
o'clock, I
determined to go out in search of some
adventure. I felt that
this grey, monstrous London of ours, with its
myriads of people,
its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins, as you once
phrased it,
must have something in store for me. I fancied a
thousand
things. The mere danger gave me a sense of
delight. I